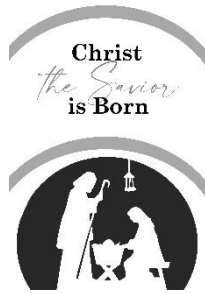


HUFF'S CHURCH CHATTER



DECEMBER 2024

Church Address: 540 Conrad Rd., Alburtis, PA 18011
Church office: 610-845-2626, Church & Chapel: 610-845-2541
Bridge Pastor: Rev. Angelee Benner-Smith (215) 771-9414
Office email: office@huffschurch.com
Website: www.huffschurch.com
Facebook Public Page: Huff's Union Church, Inc.
Facebook Group Page: Huff's Union Church Member Group
(Request to join and we will add you to this group.)

MISSION STATEMENT

To reach out to the world around us and share the everlasting love of Jesus Christ!

Making Disciples: Inside and Out.

UCC slogan: God is still speaking.

ELCA slogan: God's work, our hands.

SPECIAL HOLIDAY SERVICES

On Tuesday, December 24, 2024, we will have our Christmas Eve candlelight and communion services at both 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. We will also have our online service.

January 12, 2025, Langschwammer Nei Yaahrs Wunsch will be presented by Mike & Linda Hertzog during the 10:30 a.m. service.

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

It's Christmas! will be presented on Sunday, December 15, (inclement weather date is December 22) during the 10:30 a.m. worship service. All children ages 3 and older are welcome to participate. The program is simple with three songs and motions, and we can email the music to listen to and learn at home, so children can join in as available. We practice during Sunday School time at each worship service. No rehearsals during the week. If interested or any questions, contact Kara Benfield.

UCC SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE FALL MEETING

On November 9, at a historic meeting of the Pennsylvania Southeast Conference, 267 delegates *passed the motion* requesting authorization of the UCC General Synod for the four (4) Pennsylvania Conferences to become one Keystone Conference. We rejoice with thanksgiving and praise that the motion was also passed in the other three PA Conferences. That motion will now proceed to the 35th General Synod, July 2025 in Kansas City, MO. where it must be approved before becoming official.

KRAUSS ORGAN VISITORS

Huff's Church hosted a music teacher and four of his organ students on November 9th so they could see and play our special Krauss organ, built in 1865 in the nearby town of Palm, Pa. Alan Morrison is a world-renowned organist and organ professor at the prestigious Philadelphia Curtis Institute of Music, one of the top music schools in the United States. His students enjoyed playing our organ and commented on what a change playing the Krauss organ was for them since they normally play on full-sized pipe organs. A few of the students have performed on the grand organs at Longwood Gardens and Wanamaker's Department Store in Philadelphia. All the students will eventually go on to play professionally throughout the world. We were so fortunate to have them visit Huff's Church.

FOOD TRUCK AT HUFF'S

Friend, Inc. will bring a truck on Thursday, December 5, from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. to Huff's Church parking lot for food distribution to those in need. If you can volunteer (age 12 and older) to carry items from the Food Truck to vehicles, contact Tom Mitchell.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

Council will meet in the lower level of the church on Monday, December 9, at 7:00 p.m. Contact the Council President or Ministry Assistant for Zoom link.

BIBLE STUDY GROUP

The Bible Study Group will meet on Saturday, December 14, at 10:30 a.m. at Leanora Kline's home for a Christmas Party. If you have any questions please call her.

HUFFS CHURCH AUXILIARY MEETING

There will be no meetings for the Huff's Church Auxiliary during the winter months.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The deadline for articles to be included in the January Newsletter is Thursday, December 12, by 8:00 a.m.

2025 CHURCH ENVELOPES

Church envelopes will be ready to pick up in the church by the end of December. Watch for a notice in one of the upcoming Sunday bulletins when they will be ready for you to pick up.

We have decreased the number of envelopes ordered to reduce waste. As a result, if you want an envelope pack for someone who was not assigned an envelope number, please contact the church office and a pack will be issued.

CLOSING THE CHURCH BOOKS FOR 2024

Any donations to be credited to the 2024 Giving Statements must be received in the church office by December 31, 2024.

ANNUAL REPORTS DUE

Because we want to have a complete picture of what is happening at Huff's Union Church each year, we ask every committee, team, or group to submit a report in Word Format (if possible) of what they have done in the previous year. 2024 reports are due in the church secretary's mailbox by January 23, 2025. Treasurer's reports are an exception; they will be due in the office by early February 2025.

REMOVING CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS

The Christmas trees and decorations will be removed from the church on Saturday, January 11, 2025, beginning at 9 a.m.

MITTEN TREE

While the church was being decorated on November 30, the Mitten Tree was set up for attaching caps, scarfs, and gloves. PLEASE LIMIT YOUR TREE DONATIONS TO THESE ITEMS. See Dena Lebo-Funk's article about other items that can be donated for next year's Christmas store at St. Vincent's Mission. A box will be placed next to the tree for those items. The tree will remain standing through January 11, 2025. All donations will then be taken to the Mission in David, Kentucky. Many thanks for your generosity.

DELIVERY TRIP TO ST. VINCENT'S MISSION

God blessed Berry Crum and me with wonderful weather and peak fall foliage for our drive delivering your generous donations to St. Vincent's Mission in eastern Appalachian Kentucky. Our first stop was the county animal shelter located 5 miles from the mission. We donated 215 lbs. of Blue Buffalo dog food (from Friend Inc.), 60 lbs. of cat litter, and cat beds. God's timing was perfect because the shelter was at full occupancy and had run out of dog food that very morning! At the mission we delivered 24 hats, 21 pairs of socks/gloves, 27 scarves, and 23 new household items (sheets, bath towels, flatware, bath rugs, shower curtains, wallets, cologne, car care items) for their Christmas program which will open to approximately 200 qualified local families in late November. The families are permitted to select one new item as gift for each member of their household. We also delivered 127 seed packets for their gardening program which will help over 50 local families raise

gardens and preserve their vegetables in 2025. We toured their expanded warehouse which will house a larger and more efficient used clothing store by early 2025. The former clothing store space is now a classroom and working space for the families and interns learning faith, finances, and job interview skills. We helped the mission staff prepare for the upcoming Fall Day that they host for neighborhood families. Our trip ended with a wonderful night at the local bluegrass and gospel sing where attendees of all ages clog Appalachian-style and line dance. A special thanks and blessings to Wayne and Bea Fogel and Joe and Connie Szilli for their thoughtful and generous donations toward the cost of gas. And thank you to everyone who will be donating to this year's Mitten Tree through early January. After-Christmas sales are a great time to pick up new items most needed by St. Vincent's for next year's Christmas program: cologne and perfume sets for men and women, art sets, towels, shower curtains, bakeware, individual pots and pans, sheet sets, utensil sets, bath toys, Lego sets.

Submitted by Dena Lebo-Funk

LUNCH BUNCH

Members and friends of Huff's Church are welcome to join us for lunch on Thursday, December 19, at 12:00 noon at PC's Pub, 468 Pottstown Ave, Pennsburg, PA. We choose and purchase our own lunches from the regular menu. We need a headcount so that PC's Pub can comfortably host us. If you would like to come to Lunch Bunch on December 19, please call or text Tom Mitchell by Sunday, December 15. See you at PC's Pub to share a lot of good fellowship and laughter!

RED POINSETTIAS FOR CHRISTMAS

Red Poinsettias will adorn the Sanctuary of the Church for the Christmas Season. Order forms are due by **Sunday, December 8, 2024. Use the order form included in this newsletter or forms can be found upstairs in the church (do NOT use any other order form).** Price is \$10.00. Make checks payable to Huff's Union Church.

CONGREGATION MEETING

On December 1, 2024, there will be a Congregation meeting within the 10:30 a.m. worship service with a second date of December 8, 2024.

The required quorum to hold the meeting is 50 Active Members. In the event that the business of the meeting cannot be completed for any reason including but not limited to inclement weather, provision of additional information, or lack of quorum, the meeting will be continued to Sunday, December 8, 2024, within the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Those Active Members who attend the meeting on December 8 shall constitute a quorum and are authorized to act on these matters even if less than 50 are in attendance. If the voting is done on December 1, then the December 8 meeting will not be held.

Any Huff's Union Church Active Member may vote, including our confirmed teenagers. Although in person attendance is encouraged, contact the Church office by Noon on Tuesday, November 26, for Zoom link information if needed. Bylaws do not allow for absentee or proxy voting.

The agenda for the meeting will be the following items:

*To vote on the approval of the 2025 Union Corporation Budget. Majority approval by those who vote is required. By November 17, the 2025 proposed Budget will be available on the Huff's Church website www.huffschurch.com or Eblast. Paper copies will be available at worship services or call the office 610-845-2626 to arrange a time to pick up a copy.

*Nominations and election of members to Council.

Questions about the meeting or the vote, contact Tess Woloszanski.

HEATING THE CHURCH

Because of the enormous cost of heating oil, Church Council has once again decided that the church will be heated to a lower temperature this winter season. Therefore, when attending a church service or other activity in the building, please come prepared with warmer clothing.

CHURCH FAMILY

FUNERALS

Please pray for the Family and Friends of John H. Gouldner, who passed away on October 20, 2024.

Please pray for the family and Friends of Anna R Moyer, who passed away on October 21, 2024.

Please pray for the Family and Friends of Ethel J. Funk, who passed away on November 2, 2024.

BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

We are honoring our members who will celebrate their 80th birthday or older and also honoring those members who celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary or more. Please let us know if we missed anyone.

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Charles Hoffman	12/4
Sharon Stoudt	12/7
Joseph Szilli	12/18
Pauline Reinhard	12/20
Jean Kline	12/24

DECEMBER WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

Harold & Joanne Kemp	12/2
John & Jane Leeser	12/28

PRAYER LIST POLICY

In order to keep the Prayer List current, names will stay on the list for a 2-week period and then will be removed. To have a name included for another 2 weeks, inform the church office or write the name on the Prayer List before the worship service begins. The list is in the back of the sanctuary.

HELP NEEDED FOR SNOW REMOVAL

We are in need of people who can help shovel the walkways around the church property on Sunday mornings, as well as on Saturdays and weekdays. If you can help, please contact Jim Meitzler, Sr.

INCLEMENT WEATHER

If weather conditions are unsafe, we will cancel church and post the notice on WFMZ TV Channel 69. You can also go to our Facebook page or website, www.huffschurch.com or you may call a council member. We will make our decision by 8:00 a.m. on Sunday morning. If there are more than two inches of snow Saturday night or Sunday morning, Adult Sunday School Class is cancelled. If unsure of conditions, please put your safety first and join in our online worship.

SPECIAL OFFERING OPPORTUNITY FOR DECEMBER

The special offering opportunity for December is the UCC Christmas Fund. This offering supplements pensions and health care costs for those retired pastors and leaders of UCC congregations who fall into very low income brackets, or provides emergency assistance for pastors and families in financial need. Use the envelopes in the pew racks and either place them in the offering plate or mail to the church. Write “Christmas Fund” on the envelope.

SPONSORING BULLETINS OR FLOWERS IN 2025

Sign-up sheets for sponsoring flowers or bulletins in 2025 will be posted in the Upper Narthex on December 8. The cost for sponsoring Bulletins is \$17 and the cost for Flowers is \$31. More than one bouquet can be ordered for a Sunday. Please sign up with your name and whether this is in memory of or in honor of someone. Payment may be sent to the office or use a pew envelope and mark it bulletin or flower sponsorship. If you would like to sponsor flowers or bulletins for December 2024, please call the office.

WORSHIP SERVICES

Worship Services are broadcast live on Huff's Union Church YouTube Channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@huffschurch> under the **LIVE** tab. The edited recording of the Service is usually available for replay by 5:00 p.m. at the same link under the **VIDEO** tab. The recorded Service is usually posted by Sunday evening on Huffs Union Church Facebook pages.

PASTOR'S ARTICLE

“AN ENCOUNTER OF ANGELS”

I love angels, always have, maybe because my name (Angelee) has the Angel in the beginning or because my mom told me the story that when I was born, I looked like an “Angel”.

This is the season of many visits from Angels. Surrounding the birth of Jesus, angels are very near: Zechariah, Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds all encounter an angel or two or a song from a “heavenly host” of them. They received great news, filling them with disbelief, surprise, fear, direction, and new hope for the future!

I love the scripture about angels unaware - Hebrews 13 says it this way, “Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it.” This season of Advent and Christmas are great days full of opportunities to be those angels. And to be surprised by the way they find their way into our lives and hearts.

Usually when we think of human angel with these surprise encounters, our image is that they somehow have it all together, share from their wisdom, visit us at the right time, give from an abundance. These earthly angels do not seem to need anything from us. They have an abundance and they share.

A few years ago on the day before Thanksgiving, an angel came to me unaware.

I was at the checkout line at the grocery outlet in Thorndale, close to where we live in Coatesville. There were a few things we needed; I had probably 20 dollars of groceries sitting on the conveyer belt waiting to be checked out. A thin woman, about my age, was behind me, she had one item. As my groceries were being rung up, she said something to the clerk, and I thought having just one thing, probably wanted to get out ahead of me. As I got my

money out, she said, “I am paying for yours, I have food stamps” and I said, “Oh no, that’s ok,” and she said,” I only have food stamp because of people like you. Thank you, happy thanksgiving” I left with tears in my eyes, and when I went outside, I knew I would probably never see her again. She thanked me for paying taxes so she could have food stamps, and then shared what she had with me. Since that day I have spent time pondering that 5-minute encounter. I wish I would have asked her where she lived, what was her name, was there anyway I could help her? I have thought how important it is to share, even if you do not have much. How important it is to be a receiver as well as a giver. I realized that when I think about for those angels unawares, I must not stereotype what they will look like, or what they might teach me by gifting me with their angelic generosity. Sometimes we are the angels and sometimes we are the ones whom the angels visit. So, keep your eyes and heart open, show hospitality, and be ready to receive it. Angels unaware are abounding!

In Christ’s hope and surprise,

Pastor Angelee



Financial Report

	YTD Actual	YTD Budget	Variance
Giving for operating expenses	133,113	143,349	(10,236)
All other income	39,959	37,339	2,620
Total income	173,073	180,689	(7,616)
Expenses	248,085	278,580	(30,495)
Operating deficit	(75,012)	(97,891)	22,879
Estate gift	30,000	-	30,000
Giving for capital improvements	5,275	4,167	1,108
Capital expenditures	(92,500)	(200,000)	107,500
Transfers from Investments	125,000	293,724	(168,724)
Net income (loss)	(7,237)	-	(7,237)

Balance Sheet	10/31/24	9/30/24	12/31/23
Designated funds	75,712	55,714	118,828
General funds	3,751	14,140	7,405
Sunday School CDs	4,607	4,607	4,478
Total assets (a)	84,070	74,461	130,711

(a) excludes investments managed by Tiller



2024 Poinsettia Order Form

	YOUR NAME	IN MEMORY OF	IN HONOR OF
Plant #1			
Plant #2			
Plant #3			
Plant #4			

Red Poinsettias will adorn the Sanctuary of the Church for the Christmas Season. If you would like to order a plant(s), please complete the order form and, along with payment, give or mail to Robin Diehl, or put it in an envelope marked POINSETTIAS and place it in the offering plate. Please make checks payable to HUFF'S UNION CHURCH. Order deadline is December 8, 2024. Cost is \$10.00 per plant.

Huffs Union Church
Proposed 2025 Operating Budget

	2023	2024	2024	2025
	Actual	Budget	Forecast	Budget
Giving for operating expense	193,907	174,150	160,157	168,575
Funds from Church groups	18,012	21,000	21,000	21,000
Fundraising profit	16,007	13,910	15,664	14,000
Facility rentals	120	200	655	450
Interest income	811	2,715	2,809	1,250
Total income	228,857	211,975	200,285	205,275
Christian education	2,201	3,050	3,421	3,625
Evangelism	-	3,500	199	200
Insurance	17,920	19,728	19,322	21,353
Benevolence	40,881	23,420	24,135	21,800
Ministry expenses	12,317	10,125	12,171	11,830
Payroll	159,814	185,990	156,986	186,283
Pastoral expenses	26,304	28,842	32,280	30,624
Professional fees	5,868	1,200	1,067	1,100
Repairs and maintenance	27,044	26,852	29,322	32,775
Utilities	27,986	22,050	20,738	23,150
Bank charges	522	550	614	650
Total expenses	320,856	325,307	300,255	333,390
Operating deficit	(91,999)	(113,332)	(99,971)	(128,115)
Transfers from investments	137,011	113,332	91,711	128,115
Net income	45,012	-	(8,259)	-

Huffs Union Church
Proposed 2025 Capital Budget

	2023	2024	2024	2025	
	Actual	Budget	Forecast	Budget	Notes
Paint & caulk buildings	-	25,000	-	25,000	caulk & paint all three buildings
Chlorination system for church	15,650	-			
Support of Park Board capital expenditures	-	10,000	2,000	15,000	2024 spend was to reinforce bandshell posts; 2025 budget includes \$10k for well pit improvements and \$5k in support of repairing, prepping, and painting bandshell support columns & painting of benches
Church roof major maintenance	-	150,000	48,341		2024 spend was for major repairs vs. replacement; 2025 operating budget includes \$2k of roof maintenance
Chapel major maintenance	-	40,000	19,409	40,000	2024 spend was on bathroom ceilings / roof
Replacement fund	-	15,000		20,000	unexpected / non-designated costs
Heating/air conditioning system in church			22,801		major repairs to boiler piping/ valves; replace compressor for 1st floor
Church well pump replacement			1,949		
Total capital expenditures	15,650	240,000	94,500	100,000	
Funding of capital expenditures					
Giving - capital improvements	2,661	5,000	6,211	3,000	
Estate gifts	-	-	30,000	13,500	
Transfers from investments	12,989	235,000	58,289	83,500	
Total funding	15,650	240,000	94,500	100,000	